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Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 AF-06 ARA-10 EA-09 NEA-10

OIC-02 TAR-01 FEA-01 ACDA-10 AGR-10 AID-05 CEA-01

CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 OFA-01 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-04 ERDA-07 FMC-02 TRSE-00 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-02

OES-05 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

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INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 4672

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLOS, UNGA, IC
SUBJ: 30TH UNGA: LAW OF THE SEA

ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON'S STATEMENT AT THE 30TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS ON LAW OF THE SEA:

QUOTE:

THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND HAS FOLLOWED THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA WITH GREAT ATTENTION AND CONTINUES TO ATTACH THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO ITS DELIBERATIONS. CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE BY THE CONFERENCE IN SOME FIELDS AND A WIDE RANGE OF AGREEMENT HAS EMERGED. HOWEVER, IN SOME OTHER FIELDS, LIKE THE REGIME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SEA-BED AREA, CONSIDERABLE WORK STILL NEEDS
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TO BE DONE. MY GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN A KEEN INTEREST IN THESE

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DELIBERATIONS AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE SUCCESSFUL
CONCLUSION OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

AT THE END OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE,
WHICH TOOK PLACE IN GENEVA DURING THE PERIOD 17 MARCH
TO 9 MAY 1975, MY GOVERNMENT HAD TO TAKE STOCK OF THE SITUATION.
WE HAD THEN BEFORE US THAT SINGLE NEGOTIATING TEXT
PREPARED BY THE CHAIRMEN OF THE THREE MAIN COMMITTEES
WHICH WILL BECOME THE BASIS OF THE WORK OF THE FOURTH
SESSION IN NEW YORK IN MARCH-MAY 1976. STILL ANOTHER SESSION,
OR EVEN SESSIONS, MAY BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE
CAN CONCLUDE ITS WORK.

IN THE MEANTIME MY GOVERNMENT WAS FACED WITH THE
FOLLOWING SITUATION:

FIRST, THE FISH STOCKS IN THE ICELAND AREA CONTINUE
TO FORM THE FOUNDATION OF OUR ECONOMY -- A MATTER OF LIFE
OR DEATH TO OUR PEOPLE.

SECONDLY, ALMOST ONE HALF OF THE TOTAL DEMERSAL CATCH IN THE
AREA CONTINUES TO BE TAKEN BY FOREIGN NATIONALS
FROM DISTANT-WATER FISHING STATES, PARTICULARLY THE UNITED
KINGDOM AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. BECAUSE
OF THE SMALL SIZE OF THE FISH TAKEN BY VESSELS FROM
THE UNITED KINGDOM, ACTUALLY MORE THAN HALF OF THE NUMBER
OF FISH HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY FOREIGN FISHERMEN. THE VESSELS
ENGAGED IN THIS FISHING ARE HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED IN VARIOUS
WAYS BY THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED.

THIRDLY, THERE IS AN EVER-INCREASING CAPTURE OF IMMATURE
FISH TAKEN BY FOREIGN NATIONALS SO THAT THE RECRUITMENT
OF STOCKS IS INCREASINGLY ENDANGERED. THIS IS, FOR INSTANCE,
SHOWN BY THE FACT THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT FISH STOCK IN
ICELANDIC WATERS, NAMELY, THE COD, HAS NOW BEEN REDUCED
TO SPAWNING ONLY ONCE IN ITS LIFETIME. AND THE AVERAGE
AGE OF THE FISH CAUGHT IS NOW MUCH LOWER THAN IT HAS EVER
BEEN BEFORE. THE TOTAL FISHING EFFORT IS NOW 100 PER-
CENT GREATER THAN IT WAS 20 YEARS AGO, BUT THE CATCH IS
EVEN LESS THAN IT WAS THEN. THE IMPLICATIONS ARE EVIDENT.
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FOURTHLY THE PRESENT ICELANDIC FISHING FLEET IS FULLY
CAPABLE OF UTILIZING THE TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH IN THE AREA.
A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EXPLORATION
OF THE SEA AND THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION
HAS EXTIMATED THAT A 50 PER CENT REDUCTION OF THE FISHING
EFFORT IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC AREA WOULD NOT REDUCE THE
TOTAL CATCH. FISHING MORTALITY IN THE ICELAND AREA

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WILL HAVE TO BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE
OPTIMUM UTILIZATION.

IN VIEW OF ALL THESE FACTS THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND
DECIDED TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE
PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW OF WHICH
CONSENSUS HAS EMERGED AS MIRRORED IN THE WORK OF THE
CONFERENCE. WE DECIDED NOT TO ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC ZONE
FOR THE TIME. BEING BECAUSE SOME ASPECTS OF THAT CONCEPT
STILL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT. WE DECIDED NOT TO ADOPT RULES
WITH REGARD TO THE TERRITORIAL SEA, POLLUTION, SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH, OR THE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF FOR THE
SAME REASONS. NOR WOULD INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION BE INTERFERED
WITH IN ANY WAY. BUT WITH REGARD TO THE ONE VITAL ISSUE --
THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN FISHING -- WE COULD NOT DELAY
TAKING THE NECESSARY ACTION ANY LONGER.

CONSEQUENTLY, ON 15 JULY 1975, REGULATIONS WERE ISSUED
EXTENDING THE ICELANDIC FISHERY LIMITS TO 200 NAUTICAL
MILES. WHERE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ICELAND AND OTHER STATES
IS LESS THAN 400 NAUTICAL MILES, THE MEDIAN LINE OR
EQUI-DISTANCE PRINCIPLE IS EMPLOYED. AT THE SIME TIME
A SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IS BEING ESTABLISHED
WHICH WILL IMPLY GREAT RESTRAINT ON THE UTILIZATION OF
THE ICELANDIC FISHING FLEET EVEN AFTER THE FOREIGN
FISHING IS DISCONTINUED. THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME
IS TO ENSURE THE OPTIMUM SUSTAINABLE YIELD UNDER SCIENTIFIC
MANAGEMENT. IT WILL CONSTITUTE A THOROUGH
REVISION OF PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES WHICH SO
FAR HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HAMPERED BY THE FACT THAT FOREIGN FISHING
INTERFERED WITH THAT MANAGEMENT. THE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME
WILL BE BASED ON SCIENTIFIC CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES.

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INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-02

OES-05 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2492
INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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THE ACTION WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND HAS TAKEN IS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CONSENSUS WHICH EMERGED AT THE CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA THAT A COASTAL STATE CAN DECIDE THE TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH WITHIN A 200 MILE ZONE AND CAN ALSO DETERMINE ITS OWN CAPACITY TO UTILIZE THAT CATCH.

WHEN THE COASTAL STATE DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO HARVEST THE ENTIRE ALLOWABLE CATCH, IT SHALL GIVE OTHER STATES ACCESS TO THE SURPLUS OF THIS ALLOWABLE CATCH. THESE PRINCIPLES, WHICH ARE ALSO EMBODIED IN ARTICLES 50 AND 51 OF PART II OF THE SINGLE NEGOTIATING TEXT EMANATING FROM THE CONFERENCE, UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE STATES PARTICIPATING IN THE CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA.

IT IS, OF COURSE, ALSO QUOTE CLEAR THAT SOME STATES STILL FIGHT THIS KIND OF SOLUTION SINCE THEY WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE
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THEIR PAST ACTIVITIES AND SEND LARGE TRAWLER FLEETS TO UTILIZE THE FISHING GROUNDS OF OTHER NATIONS WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT. BUT THE TIME HAS COME TO FACE THE FACT THAT SUCH PRACTICES ARE OPPOSED BY THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THAT THE SYSTEM ON WHICH THEY ARE BASED IS OBSOLETE AND QUITE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE NATIONS WHOSE RESOURCES THE DISTANT-WATER FISHING STATES WANT TO USE. INSTEAD OF FIGHTING AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE, THEY SHOULD BE CONTENT THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO COMPENSATE FOR THE IMMENSE RICHES WHICH THEY HAVE TAKEN OUT OF THOSE RESOURCES IN THE PAST. AS FAR AS MY COUNTRY IS CONCERNED, THOSE OBSOLETE POLICIES HAVE MANY TIMES IN THE PAST JEOPARDIZED OUR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL AND WE CANNOT TOLERATE THAT KIND OF EXERCISE ANY LONGER.

HOWEVER, MY GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO FACILITATE REASONABLE

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INTERIM ADJUSTMENTS TO MITIGATE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP FOR
FOREIGN FISHERMEN BUT TWO MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS MUST THEN
BE KEPT IN MIND. ON THE ONE HAND, OUR POLICY IN THIS FIELD
HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS NOW AND CANNOT COME AS
A SURPRISE TO ANYONE -- LEAST OF ALL TO THE NATIONS WHOSE
FISHERMEN HAVE FREQUENTED OR WORKED OUR AREA. ON THE
OTHER HAND -- AND I EMPHASIZE THIS -- WE DO NOT SUBMIT
TO ECONOMIC PRESSURES SUCH AS THOSE SHOWN BY THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY WHICH HAS EMPLOYED A LANDING BAN ON OUR
TRAWLERS IN GERMAN PORTS AND EXERCISED ITS VETO IN PREVENTING
THE APPLICATION OF TARIFF CONCESSIONS IN THE EUROPEAN
ECONOMIC COMMUNITY.

IT IS OUR HOPE THAT OUR NEW REGULATIONS WILL BE
RESPECTED BY ALL CONCERNED AND THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO USE
OUR NATURAL RESOURCES IN CONFORMITY WITH THE PRINCIPLES
WHICH WERE SUPPORTED, AS I SAID BEFORE, BY AN OVERWHELMING
MAJORITY AT THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE. THIS IS OUR
INTENTION AND THIS IS WHAT WE SHALL DO.

IT HAS BEEN MAINTAINED IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT
OF ICELAND SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE WORK
OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA AND THAT BY ACTING
NOW THE FURTHER WORK OF THAT CONFERENCE IS MADE MORE DIFFICULT.
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MY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SHARE THIS VIEW. ON THE CONTRARY,
BY ADHERING STRICTLY TO THE PRINCIPLES OVERWHELMINGLY
SUPPORTED BY THE CONFERENCE, MY GOVERNMENT HAS EMPHASIZED
ITS RESPECT FOR THE CONFERENCE AND IT IS OUR CONVICTION
THAT OUR ACTION, AS WELL AS ANY SIMILAR ACTION FROM
OTHER STATES, RATHER THAN HINDER THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE,
WILL PROMOTE ITS SUCCESS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
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